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Madison WI
danenet.org

February 19, 2018

Chairman Ajit V. Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Bridging the Digital Divide for Low-Income Consumers, WC Docket Nos. 17-287, 11-42, 09-197
CC: Senator Ron Johnson, Senator Tammy Baldwin, Representative Pocan

Dear Chairman Pai:

DANenet is a nonprofit organization in Madison, Wisconsin, founded in 1995. Our mission is to make information technology accessible and affordable through education and services for nonprofit organizations and individuals with barriers to access. Our digital inclusion initiative Everyone On Madison provides broadband adoption support, digital literacy classes and low-cost devices to low-income families.

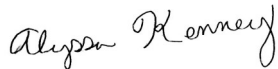
I am writing to provide comments on WC Docket number 17-287, 11-42, 09-197 on behalf of our organization. We oppose the proposed elimination of the Lifeline Broadband Provider created in 2016 by the Lifeline Order in paragraph 55. Broadband access is a critical service for thousands of low-income families. A specific provider designation is needed for families seeking this service and for community-based organizations working to connect families to this service.

In Wisconsin, close to 200,000 households access the Lifeline program. Our state has a model enrollment and verifying process that ensures household eligibility. DANenet opposes the elimination of non-facilities based ETC's as Lifeline providers (in paragraphs 62 and 64). If this language is included, well over 100,000 low-income households will lose access to critical services. When AT&T stopped providing Lifeline services in 2016, thousands and thousands of low-income households were left with only non-facilities based ETC's for service. Further this language would place an undue burden on the Wisconsin Public Service Commission staff to make determinations about facilities and non-facilities based ETCs, without consistency across states this would be deeply unfair to consumers.

Wisconsin already supplements facilities based ETCs by providing an additional subsidy to Lifeline, this helps to ensure that facilities-based carriers continue to thrive and have capital available to extend and improve their networks.

In 2017, DANENet assisted 600 low-income households in getting home broadband access, we provided digital literacy to 326 adults and we distributed 256 desktop computers to low-income families. Families have told us their family can do homework, communicate with their healthcare provider, talk with family, find the bus schedule and work even more hours with home connectivity and a reliable device. Of the 600 families we worked with last year more than half use the lifeline subsidy. Lifeline is a critical part of closing the digital divide and the proposed changes will eliminate service for thousands and thousands of low-income households in Wisconsin.

Most Sincerely,



Alyssa Kenney
Executive Director, DANENet

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